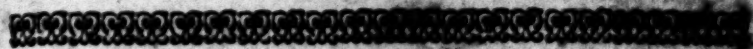


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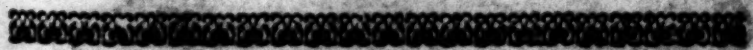


Times of PUBLICK DISTRESS *Times*
of TRIAL.

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE
OF SOME
SERMONS

Preach'd in the

TRON-CHURCH of *Edinburgh*, in
the Month of *November*, 1745.



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THE PUBLIC DISTRESS
OF TRIAL

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE



SERMONS

FROM THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN, IN
THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, 1745

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Preach'd in the

TRON-CHURCH of *Edinburgh*, in
the Month of *November*, 1745.

O N

Occasion of the present REBELLION.

By GEORGE WISHART^K M. A. one of the
Ministers of *Edinburgh*.

EDINBURGH:

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DAN. xii. 10.

Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

THESE Words are Part of *Daniel's* Vision, which we have in the three last Chapters of this Book. In the latter Part of the Vision, from about the Middle of the preceeding Chapter, there is represented to him the great Distress which the *Jews* should suffer, in being invaded by *Antiochus Epiphanes* King of *Syria*, and his making an entire Conquest of their Country. To this is the Prophecy very evidently to be applied, as appears from the Circumstances here described, compared with the History of what happened to the *Jews* from that cruel Conqueror; his laying waste their Country, slaying great Numbers of them, polluting their Sanctuary (a), by setting up an Idol-Deity there, which he commanded them to worship; and persecuting with the greatest Cruelties those who adhered to the Religion and Laws of their Country: In all which he was assisted by many Time-servers among the *Jews*, who wanted to secure themselves in this publick Distress of their Country, and to merit the Favour of the Conqueror by their base Compliances; So

(a) Chap. xi. v. 31.

So it is said, he should *have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant*, and should *corrupt them by flatteries* (a). All this we have described in the preceding Chapter.

As this *Antiochus* was, in several Respects, a remarkable Type of Antichrist, the great Tyrant of the Christian Church, and Persecutor of the Saints in the latter Days; there seems from the 36th Verse of that Chapter, to be a sudden Transition made to the Oppressions of Antichristian Tyranny. It is said there, *The king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god. This corresponds very much with the Description the Apostle gives of the Man of Sin, 2 Thes. ii. 4. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.* Both Descriptions are a very proper Representation of the Papal Tyranny; of him who, under the arrogant Pretence of being Christ's Vicegerent upon Earth, assumes to himself the sole Prerogative of God, requiring of Men an implicate Subjection in Matters of Faith and Conscience; who pretends to give Men Dispensations and Pardons for breaking the Laws of Heaven, thus ascending the Throne of God, or even raising himself above it: Who usurps a supreme Dominion over other earthly Powers, a Right of deposing Kings, and of loosing Subjects from their Allegiance to them; thus *exalting himself above all that are called Gods* upon Earth. This is He who, in the pretended Character of the alone visible Head of the Church, hath *polluted the sanctuary of God*, hath corrupted the pure Religion of Christ with the most absurd Doctrines, and the grossest Mixtures of Heathenish Idolatry and Superstition. To him agrees that Part of the Description,

ver.

(a) Verses 30. and 32.

ver. 38. according to the Explication given of it by some celebrated Commentators, *In his Estate shall be honour the God of Forces:* Or, as they interpret it, *Together with God in his Seat shall be honour* Protectors or Guardians; which is very fitly applicable to the Antichristian Idolatry, of worshipping Angels and Saints, and flying to them for Protection in Distresses. This is He, who, on Pretence of maintaining the Religion of the merciful Jesus, hath filled the Christian World with Blood and Cruelty; persecuting to Death those who have dared to shake off his spiritual Tyranny, and to become Followers of Jesus Christ, as their only Lord and Master, in Matters of Religion.

What Reason have we, my Brethren, to bless God, for the happy Deliverance of these Lands from this Antichristian Tyranny and Oppression! With what Horror should we look upon any Attempt to subject us again to that cruel Yoke of Bondage, by imposing upon us a Popish Government!

After the Description given to *Daniel* of such Times of Calamity and Oppression, accompanied with the Treachery and Apostacy of false Brethren, the Words of my Text represent a most useful Purpose of such Dispensations of Providence; *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.* There is here a plain Allusion to the Effect of Fire upon Metals, which is to try and purify them; to distinguish true Gold or Silver from baser Metal, and to purify it from all remaining Dross. The like Effect have Times of publick Danger and Calamity upon People; they put them to the Trial, and bring forth what is in them; They serve to distinguish the sincerely Good from the false and hypocritical; those who are thoroughly established in good and reasonable Principles of Conduct, which

which show a Man always the same,--from Men of no Principles, of wavering and unstable Minds, who are ready to change Appearances with the Times. They further serve to purify the sincerely Good from remaining Weaknesses and Imperfections, and to make them shine the brighter in the Glory of a steadfast Goodness, and in more advanced Degrees of it. While the Good are thus distinguished, and purified from remaining Pollutions; the Wicked, who had formerly mingled with the Good, now throwing off the Mask of Goodness, shall appear in their proper Colours, by a Conduct suitable to their real Temper and Character: *But the wicked shall do wickedly.* It is added, *and none of the wicked shall understand:* Those who are hardened in their sinful Courses, shall not have the Wisdom to exercise due Consideration under such Dispensations of Providence, so as to improve them for their Correction and Reformation: *But the wise shall understand; the men of wisdom shall see God's name (a);* those of an understanding heart, whose Hearts are opened to embrace the Instructions of true religious Wisdom, shall acknowledge the Hand of God in such Dispensations, and improve these Trials for their further Advancement in Wisdom and Goodness.

Here it is represented as a Piece of true Wisdom, to make suitable Observations and Reflections on the Conduct of Divine Providence, particularly in Times of *Publick Distress*, and to improve these for the Purposes of Religion and Virtue. This Piece of Wisdom we are called to exercise at *this Time*, under the Distress which our Country suffers, and the Danger which threatens our most valuable Interests; when a

Set

(a) Micah vi. 9,

Set of desperate Men have taken up Arms against their Country, in order to overturn our happy Constitution, to set a Popish Pretender on the Throne, and thereby deprive us at once both of our Civil and Religious Liberties; who, in pursuance of this pernicious Design, have spread Confusion over our whole Country, have committed most grievous Oppressions, have begun to sheath their Swords in the Bowels of their Countrymen, and threaten us still with further Bloodshed and Devastation.

To give Relief to our Minds in this melancholy Situation, by leading us to a due Acknowledgment of a wise Divine Providence, in the useful Purpose for which these Things are ordered; and, at the same Time, to give us Instruction for our Conduct and Behaviour in these Circumstances of Distress; let us consider the View in which they are represented in my Text, as of a *trying*, and consequently, of a *purifying Nature*: *Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried.*

TIMES of Publick Distress befalling, or further threatening a Country, are most properly *Times of Trial*. They serve to discover Mens real Tempers and Characters: They give special Occasion to any thing of true Worth and Strength of Mind to exert itself; and they bring forth the secret Corruptions of a bad Heart: They serve to distinguish real Goodness and Honesty, which is always consistent with itself, from false Pretences which have been taken up to serve the Times: They likewise try the Strength and Degrees of Mens Virtue, and discover the Weakness and Imperfection of their Character: The Consequence of all which is, the further Purification and Improvement of the sincerely Good, and making them shine with greater Glory and Lustre. In this
Light

Light are such Dispensations of Providence often represented in Scripture, with the same Allusion as in my Text. *Psal.* lxvi. 10, 11, and *1 Pet.* i. 6, 7. In several Respects do Times of Distress, according to the particular Views in which they cast up to us, serve for our Trial.

1. *Distress of any kind*, serves to try the Strength of our Minds, how far we are fortified in the Command of ourselves. This it is not easy to judge of, while Things go smoothly on with us, and we meet with nothing to ruffle our Temper. The proper Trial of our Strength is, if we can maintain a calm and easy Mind under worldly Losses, Disappointments and Sufferings; if we can command the Exercise of deliberate Thought and Reflection, and set about our Duty with Composure, amidst outward Disturbances and Dangers; if in these Circumstances we can carry our Minds so far above the World, as to enjoy an Happiness within ourselves, in the Exercises and Reflections of a good Heart, in the Pleasures of devout Meditation, in the Satisfaction of a good Conscience, in the joyful Sense of the Favour of God.

2. *Times of Distress* serve to try our Faith in God and Love to him. While all things about us are quite agreeable, we may find no Difficulty in maintaining the Faith of a wise and good Disposer of all Things: While it is well with our selves, we may easily believe that all is happily ordered; and can argue with great Satisfaction concerning Troubles at a Distance from us, that in these the best Purposes are most effectually pursued; that they are necessary Parts of a wise connected Scheme, and most justly to be acquiesced in as the Determinations of infinite Wisdom. While we immediatly enjoy the Fruits of the Divine Bounty, if we have any thing

of Thought and Reflection, and are not lost to all Sense of Gratitude, we must readily feel some Sentiments of Love and Affection toward our supreme Benefactor. But when Trouble and Distress actually comes upon us, then we are put to the Trial, how far the Faith of a good and wise Being ordering the Affairs of the World --- hath taken thorough Possession of our Hearts, and is established in us; if we can still maintain the same good Thoughts of God, and remain firmly persuaded, while *Clouds and darkness are round about him, that righteousness and judgment are ever the habitation of his Throne* (a); If our Faith of Divine Things is so fixed and prevailing in us, that we can effectually apply the Consolations of Religion and Christianity for Supporting us in our Distresses. When Dangers are near, and surround us on all Hands, then it appears what Length our Trust and Confidence in God can go; If we can maintain this with that Stedfastness which *Job* expresses, *Tho' he slay me yet will I trust in him* (b). our Love to God is then tried, how far it hath obtained the Command of our Hearts, so as to dispose us to take the worst Things in good part from his Hand; If the Sense of his innumerable Favours, can reconcile our Minds to Afflictions dispensed by him, and make us feel the Force of that Sentiment, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* (c) If our Love to God is strong enough to bear us out in a patient Submission to whatever Hardships he is pleased to lay upon us, saying with an unshaken Constancy and Resignation, *It is the*
B
Lord

(a) Psal. xcvi. 2. (b) Job xiii. 15. (c) Job ii. 10.

Lord, let him do what seemeth him good (a); Father, not my will, but thine be done (b).

3. Times of *General Distress or Danger*, serve to try the Sincerity and Strength of Men's Friendship. Selfish People, who, in Times of general Peace and Prosperity, could easily carry on an Appearance of Friendship, and exercise this in many Instances, while their own Interests were in no Danger; such, when general Distress comes or Danger threatens, are wholly taken up in securing and providing for themselves, and find no Place in their Thoughts for the Concerns of others. Whereas those of a real good Heart are never so much swallowed up in their own particular Concerns, in Times of the greatest Danger and Distress, as not to bear a friendly Part with others: The Sense of common Calamity awakens their Friendship the more; and, in the Exercise of this, in Acts of Compassion and Sympathy with others, do they find their own greatest Relief.

4. When we meet with Trouble and *Disturbance from the Hands of Men*, when we suffer by their Oppression and Violence, this serves particularly to try the Strength of our Humanity, and how far the generous Principles of Christianity prevail with us, so as to bear down fierce Resentment. How far we are able to preserve our Minds from being overcome of evil (c), and to maintain a patient and forgiving Temper of Mind towards our Enemies, and thus to triumph over their Wickedness and Illnature.

5. When we are particularly exposed to *Hardships and Persecutions in a steadfast Adherence to Truth and Goodness, and in following the just Dictates of Reason*

(a) 1 Sam. ii. 18. (b) Luke xxii. 42. (c) Rom. xii. 21.

Reason and Conscience, this proves a strong Trial to the Sincerity and Strength of our Virtue. Many who have *heard the word with joy (a)*, who have felt an Impression of Divine Truths, and have for a Time been somewhat influenced by them in their Practice, *when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word*, on Account of true Religion, are *by and by offended*, and *make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience*. Then is the Time for us to shew whether our Appearances of Goodness have been any more than a Matter of Conveniency with us, which must yield to the different Turns of our worldly Interest; If Religion hath truly taken Possession of our Hearts, and is become a commanding Principle within us; How far the Love of Truth and Goodness prevails with us; If Conscience and Honesty can have Force enough to overcome the Interests and Terrors of this World; If a Regard to God, if the Faith of Things future and invisible, hath such Command over us, as to conquer the Fear of Men and of all the external Evils they can inflict. When the Principles we have professed in a Time of Ease and Tranquillity, are like to lead us into Danger, or to expose us to Inconveniences, this puts the Soundness of our Hearts to the Trial; whether or not we are settled in our Principles upon reasonable Grounds, and have the Honesty of Heart to follow them stedfastly in our Practice, at all Hazards.

6. *When the Interests of the Publick suffer, or are in Danger*, when its valuable Concerns, Sacred and Civil, are threatned; this serves to try the Sincerity and Strength of Mens Publick Affection; how far they are ready to shew this, by exerting themselves

(a) Matth. xiii. 20, 21.

selves vigorously, and running all Hazards of Life and Fortune in the publick Cause : Whether their former Pretences of Zeal for publick Interest have been any more than Words, or artful Methods to raise themselves, or carry on the Designs of a Faction ; whether all their former zealous Appearances for Liberty, have been meant to help forward the secret Plots and Contrivances of the Enemies of their Country, whom they are ready to join with more openly, whenever their Designs are ripe for Execution : Or if an honest Concern for securing the Liberties of their Country, will now appear with double Warmth for the Preservation of them, when threatned with immediate and utter Destruction. When the Interests of true Religion are in Danger, when Attempts are made by the Enemies both of the Civil and Religious Liberties of Mankind, which, if they succeed, must issue in the Subversion of the free Profession of true Religion, as well as of the other valuable Interests of a Nation ; This puts Men to the Trial, how far their Religion is dear to them, how far they are disposed to remain firm and resolute in maintaining and defending it : Or if they hold their Religion cheap ; are ready, for the Sake of some apprehended worldly Interest, or for gratifying some particular Humour, to let their Religion take its Chance ; and can easily be soothed into the Belief of its being in no Danger, in Opposition to all likelihood and the strongest Degree of Probability. Such Times give Occasion to shew, whether Mens Publick Spirit is of the right Kind, such as regards the *real and substantial* Interests of their Country. There is a certain Kind of it, which leads People to prefer a whimsical and imaginary Glory of their Country,

Country, to the most solid publick Advantages. A remarkable Instance of this we have in the People of *Israel* (a), who, weary of the Liberty and Happiness they enjoyed under that Government which God himself had instituted, wanted to have the Glory of an absolute Monarch at their Head, *like the Nations around them*, and persisted in this Desire, even after they had been divinely warned, that he would make himself rich and great at their Expence. The like whimsical Country-Spirit appears remarkable in Some at this Day, who would prefer a Race of Tyrants, whom they represent as belonging to their own Country, and specially related to them,—to the Enjoyment of Liberty, Property, the free Exercise of their Religion, and all those Blessings which can make a Nation happy,—under what they insolently call a *foreign Usurpation*: This is the Name they presume to give to the mild, peaceable, and auspicious Reigns, of Princes the nearest in Blood of the Protestant Heirs of the Crown: With this Name do they reproach our happy Deliverance from Popery, Slavery, and Arbitrary Power, brought about by that glorious Instrument of Providence, who was called over to our Relief, by the general Voice of the Nation groaning under Oppression. The happy Situation following upon this, and the substantial Blessings of a free Government which we now enjoy, they would needs exchange for an imaginary Honour of their Country, to be ruled by what they call their *natural Prince*, that is, one who claims them as his absolute, indefeasible Property; tho' the Consequence of this would be to render the Nation as truly Despicable as Miserable, and *in reality* the
Slaves

(a) 1 Sam. viii,

Slaves or mean Dependants of a foreign Power. When an Attempt is made towards such a fatal Change, this gives particular Occasion of discovering what Sort of Country-Spirit Men are possess'd of; if it turns only on the Pride of a Name, of boasted Antiquity, of a pretended ancient Race of Kings, or if it is a Spirit enlivened with a just Sense of Publick Interest, and may be depended on for substantial Service to their Country.

7. In the last Place, *In such a Time of Distress as we now suffer*, when a Set of Men are combined together, to carry on the most pernicious Design against their Country, its Constitution and Government, and most important Concerns; there are special Circumstances of Trial which Some will be exposed to beyond Others. Particular Connections of Interest, Relation, Friendship, or Dependence, with those who are engaged in the wicked Attempt, the Force of their Persuasions, the Influence of their Example; these are special Trials of a Man's Firmness and Constancy of Mind. Such Enticements are apt to prevail on Men, either to join altogether in the rebellious Enterprize, or at least to think favourably of it, so far to embrace the corrupt slavish Principles which support the Cause, as to argue in Defence of it, and endeavour to make Proselytes to it, and prepare others for receiving the fatal Change intended.

In all these Respects are Times of publick Distress and Danger, Times of Trial. To pursue this View of them further, in the Consequences of such a Trial; It serves,

1. To discover Men to the World, to make them appear in their true Colours, to lay open their real Tempers and Characters, to the Observation of Mankind. And this is of great Use to Mankind.

It

It makes Way for distinguishing sincere Goodness with its due Reward of Praise and Honour from the World ; and for excluding bad Men, when thus discovered, from sharing any longer in this proper Reward of Goodness, by the Help of a specious Appearance of it. It makes Way for the Justice of Mankind, in rewarding true Virtue with due Marks of Esteem, and punishing real Vice with Contempt. So far as Men are brought to a just Discovery, this puts a Stop to the deceitful Arts of bad Men, to the further carrying on of their wicked, selfish, and ambitious Designs, under an hypocritical Disguise. It enables us to distinguish who are worthy of the Trust and Confidence of Mankind ; who deserve to have *their* valuable and important Interests committed to them, and may be depended on henceforth, as thorough and steadfast Friends to a publick Interest. It gives us Opportunity of distinguishing with greater Certainty, whom we may rely on as sincere and faithful Friends, who will stand by us in every Change of Circumstances, will *love at all times*, and shew themselves *born for adversity* (a). As it gives those of true and honest Hearts a more perfect Knowledge of one another, it makes way for their enjoying one another's Friendship and Society with greater Satisfaction.

2. Such Times of Trial serve to discover us to ourselves. And this is of the greatest Importance: The whole Art of true Wisdom and Virtue, the Beginning and Progress of it, our continued Improvement in it, depends on *knowing ourselves*. This necessary Piece of Knowledge is best promoted by the Trial of Adversity. While we are in easy Circumstances

(a) Prov. xvii. 17.

stances, we can hardly judge, how far the Principles of Goodness prevail with us, what Degrees of Strength they have acquired ; there may be Weaknesses and Imperfections in us, which we hardly observe, for Want of a proper Opportunity of shewing them to us : There may be Seeds of bad Passions lurking within us, till we meet with something to awaken them. When therefore we meet with the Trial of severe and threatening Dispensations of Providence, and are set to act our Parts in these ; this gives us Occasion to know ourselves more thoroughly, what Command we really have of our own Temper. When we are exposed to Hardships and Sufferings in the Cause of Truth, Goodness and Honesty, or in adhering to the publick Interest, then we come to know by Experiment the Strength, and the Weakness of our Minds. If the Trial shews us in a favourable Light, as maintaining our Ground, and conquering Difficulties and Temptations ; this makes Way for the greatest Joy and Satisfaction, in the approving Testimony of our own Hearts, concerning our Bravery and Constancy, and the Reality and Strength of good Principles in us. If we discover Instances of Weakness and Imperfection, this makes Way for correcting them, for strengthening what is weak, for attending more carefully to ourselves in those Instances where we are most apt to give way, and fortifying ourselves with new Resolution. And thus,

3. The Good being distinguished from the Bad, are at the same Time further purified and improved, and made to shine with greater Glory and Lustre. Getting into a more thorough Knowledge of themselves, they are put upon further correcting and improving their inward Temper, subduing their remaining bad Passions, and cultivating all good Principles

ciples in themselves to a greater Degree of Strength, and a more uniform Command in their Souls. Such Trials giving special Exercise to their Virtue, do by this Means contribute to the further Improvement of it. Their Faith, their Love to God and Goodness, their Concern for the Interests of Mankind, their Zeal for an honest Cause, being specially exercised by Opposition and Danger, gather Strength, and become more prevailing, so as to be more remarkably fruitful in all the Beauties of an holy and useful Life. Their Goodness display'd in these Circumstances, and receiving further Improvement, becomes more remarkable, both in the inward Sense of their own Minds, and in the View of the World. Their Patience and Fortitude, Virtues which there was hardly Place for exercising in easy and prosperous Times, come to shine forth in Adversity. The Strength and Influence of all religious Principles in them becomes most conspicuous, establishing them in a patient Submission to Divine Providence in its hardest Dispensations; quieting and composing their Minds, and discovering a Cheerfulness and Serenity in their Behaviour, amidst outward Disturbances and Alarms. They become glorious by their Bravery and Stedfastness, in maintaining the Cause of Truth and Goodness, in Opposition to the Terrors of this World; in adhering to the valuable Interests of the Publick, whatever Hardships befall them, or Dangers threaten them in this worthy Course. While others give Way, and are overcome by these Trials, this makes the Glory of those who maintain their Integrity the more conspicuous: It sets forth their Strength and Constancy of Mind the more, in standing out against the Influence of bad Examples, joined with the other Temptations

of such Circumstances. Being further purified from the remaining Blemishes and Imperfections of the Character, they come to shine with more sparkling Lustre and Beauty, like Gold refined from all its Dross.

Thus I have endeavour'd to illustrate the View which *Times of Publick Danger and Calamity* are represented in my Text, as of a *trying*, and consequently of a *purifying* Nature.

WHAT hath been said, serves 1. To lead us to a suitable Acknowledgment of the Wisdom of Providence in such Dispensations. 2. To give us Instruction concerning our Behaviour in these Circumstances, and the useful Improvement we are to make of them.

First, Let us be led by what hath been said to a suitable Acknowledgment of the Wisdom of Providence in such Dispensations. They are ordered by an infinitely wise God, for the best Purposes; for the Trial of Virtue, to distinguish the Good from the Bad, and deliver the World from the Mischief of a deceitful Mask of Goodness; to refine and improve the Virtues of the Good; to make Virtue shine the brighter, and consequently to recommend it the more to the Esteem and Affections of Men. Outward Distresses are employed by infinite Wisdom, to advance the Beauty and Perfection of the moral World: The Wickedness of Men, exercised in Acts of Violence and Oppression, and in disturbing the publick Peace, is over-ruled, contrary to their Intention, into a Subserviency to the Purposes of Goodness, and the greatest Interest of good Men, their further Amendment and Progress towards Perfection: and when God hath in this Way performed his

work upon them, in correcting what is amiss in them, and exercising their Faith and Virtue in order to their Improvement, he will then further maintain the Cause of Righteousness, by *punishing the stout Heart* of their insolent Oppressors (a). The Sufferings and Persecutions of the Good, are made the Means of advancing the general Interests of Religion and Virtue in the World, by displaying the Power and happy Influence of religious Principles, in overcoming outward Hardships, and raising the Mind above them; by setting forth the Beauty and Glory of Virtue to greater Advantage, as acting its Part in Circumstances of Distress; and so recommending it to the Hearts of Men. And this happy Effect of suffering bravely in the Cause of Righteousness, hath been found to go farther, than any Influence the Dread of such Suffering hath had to prejudice Men against the Cause, or to make many of its seeming Friends fall off from it. Times of Persecution, tho' they have proved a Stumbling-block to many, have, *in the Main*, promoted the Interests of Truth and Righteousness. So much does an infinitely wise God bring Good out of Evil! *Surely the wrath of man shall praise him* (b).

In these severe Dispensations then, serving such valuable Purposes, let us acknowledge the Wisdom and Goodness of Divine Providence; let us be so just as to maintain the best Thoughts of the supreme Disposer of all Things, to keep up the constant Exercise of Love to him, an entire Submission and Resignation to his Will, all whose Works are done in Truth and Righteousness; let us steadily trust in him, for an happy Issue of the worst Things we see
and

(a) Isa. x. 12. (b) Psal. lxxvi. 19.

and meet with, and patiently wait for it. If Troubles are not brought to so speedy a Conclusion, as we have wished and hoped for, let it satisfy us, That the Purposes of infinite Wisdom, in ordering these Things, are not yet fully accomplished; and that when these are sufficiently answered, he will settle all Commotions, and finish his own Work in due Time, and in the best and happiest Manner. Let us *wait on the Lord, and keep his way* (a).

Secondly, This View in which Times of publick Distress have been considered, gives us Instruction concerning our Behaviour in these Circumstances, and the useful Improvement we are to make of them. If we are possessed of any thing of true Worth, let us be concerned to act our Parts well in these Times of Trial: Let us improve to proper Purposes the Discoveries they serve to make: That so, by a right Behaviour in these Circumstances, and a wise Improvement of them, we may come to shine in the Glory of a steadfast and more exalted Virtue.

1. Let us be concerned to act our Parts well, and to remain constant in these Times of Trial. Let us endeavour to maintain a reasonable Composure of Mind amidst all our outward Disturbances; not to suffer our Spirits to sink; not to be overcome with Perplexity, with anxious Cares and fearful Apprehensions, with unchristian Resentment against the immediate Authors of our Sufferings. Let us be careful to maintain a firm and unshaken Faith in God and Love to him, to hold fast our Integrity and not to let it go, to adhere to our honest Principles inviolably, whatever Dangers and Inconveniencies this may expose us to. And as the present
State

State of Affairs is more particularly a Trial of our *Publick Virtue* ; let us, in a special Manner, have it at Heart to be true and faithful to our Country, to the Church of God, and to our Posterity ; whatever Difficulties we have to struggle with. Let us all, in our several Stations, shew a becoming Zeal and Stedfastness, in Support of our happy Constitution, the Government under which we have enjoyed so many Blessings, our Religion, our Laws and Liberties, against the Dangers which now threaten them, and whatever personal Hazards we may incur.

But it will be alledged, that in all this we set up a Shew of publick Good, and of the Cause of Religion, in which Right and Justice are sacrificed ; which can never be a proper Scene for displaying Christian Magnanimity, and a true publick Spirit amidst Trials : That the Trial of Virtue is on the other Side, where Men expose their Lives and Fortunes in support of a Point of *Right*, as is pretended, for restoring a Family to their Right which they have been unjustly deprived of. Concerning this, our Consciences have of late been applied to, with strong Words instead of Argument, unless we will take that as an Argument to be told very confidently, that this Right is *as clear as Noon-day*, that we are certainly *in our Consciences and secret Thoughts, convinced of it, that every wise and unprejudiced Man is in his own Mind well satisfied of it.* And what is this Right so extremely clear and self-evident, carrying such irresistible Conviction along with it ? A Right in a Man to possess a Nation, a large Body of Mankind, as his Property, as absolutely his as his Cattle ; a Right to dispose of the one, in as absolute and incontrollable a Manner as the other ; a Right which he can never forfeit by the worst Usage

Age of them, and which must descend from him to his Heirs as their natural Inheritance, unalienable on any Account whatever. This hath been dignified with the Name of a *Divine Right*, established by God himself.

But, my Brethren, let not Words impose upon you; consult your Bibles, and judge for yourselves. I dare appeal to those who are best acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and have studied them most impartially, if they can discover there the smallest Foundation for such a Right; if they can find any Passage in them, from Beginning to End, that so much as establishes one Form of Civil Government as universally preferable to all others; much less descends so far as to determine the Right of Succession in Kingly Government. In the Government of the *Jews*, which was conducted by an immediate divine Interposition, do we not find a Change made from one Form to another? And indeed, so far is there from being any thing which favours a divine Right of one Man to govern by his single Will, that their first Institution of Government, which God appears to have made Choice of as best for that People, was much of a Republican Form, saving that God himself was in an extraordinary Manner their King: And when they themselves would needs have *a king to judge them like all the nations* (a), that is, an absolute Monarch, as appears from the Description given of him; it is represented that God, provoked by their unreasonable Importunity, and the Ingratitude they shewed to him in the Demand, *gave them a king in his anger* (b). When thus they came to be governed by Kings, we see that, in the whole

(a) 1 Sam. viii. (b) Hos. xiii, 11.

whole Course of them, which was still directed by God, no Regard was had to the supposed Right of Primogeniture, none of them being so much as of the eldest Tribe: And after *Saul* their first King, who was of the youngest of the Tribes, the Rule of lineal Succession is departed from in both the succeeding Instances; the Kingdom passing altogether out of *Saul's* Family, to *David*, of the Tribe of *Judah*, and the youngest of the Family he belonged to; from whom it descended to *Solomon*, one of the youngest of his Sons.

When the Apostle *Paul* exhorts Christians to be subject to the higher Powers, declaring that there is no Power but of God, that the Powers that be are ordained of God (a); you may observe in the first Place, that he cannot be understood to establish a peculiar divine Right, in the Form of Government which then took Place among the *Romans*; as if he would give such a Sanction to that violent Usurpation upon the *Roman Liberties*, which introduced the Reign of the Emperors: His Expressions respect no peculiar Institution or Set of Magistrates; and we may be persuaded that, had the Commonwealth still subsisted, he would have said the same Things, and given the same Directions. In the second Place, you will observe that, in these Exhortations of Obedience and Submission to Civil Governors, he plainly refers to the Ends of their Office, and supposes them to act agreeable to these, as determining the Grounds and Measures of that Obedience and Submission they are intitled to (b): For rulers, says he, are not a terror to good works, but to the evil: Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same; for

(a) Rom. xiii. 1, &c. (b) Ver. 3, 4, 5.

he is the minister of God to thee for good: But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; For he is the minister of God, a revenger, to execute wrath on him that doeth evil: Wherefore, for these Reasons, and upon this Bottom, ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. This does by no means take away from People a Right to vindicate their Liberties, in Opposition to Tyranny; as a Tyrant cannot be said to act the Part of a minister of God, to others for good; but is quite the Reverse of the Character here described, being a terror to good works, and not to the evil.

As this pretended *Divine Right to a People as a Man's absolute Property, a Right of succeeding to Government, as a Person's natural Inheritance* which can on no Account be alienated,—has not the least Foundation in Scripture; so it is in itself most absurd and unreasonable. That an *Office, the Office of Government*, which is of the greatest Importance, on the right Management of which depends the Welfare of a whole Nation, and the most valuable Interests of Mankind in this World; that this should be considered as a Man's *Estate*, an Estate too which he can never forfeit on any Account, an Inheritance to be transmitted from Father to Son, which one hath an *hereditary Right* of succeeding to, *unalterably, however disqualified he may be for the Office*, and for answering the Ends of it: That the good God, the merciful Parent of Mankind, should have given a Man an absolute Right to dispose of his Fellow-creatures, of their Lives and Fortunes, as he pleases; should have condemned a whole Nation to an unlimited Subjection to the arbitrary Will of one Man and his Family, they and all they have being ordained

dained the proper Goods of that Family, and hath left no lawful Remedy in their Hands against the most cruel and oppressive Tyranny, or the Prospect of the continued Succession of it. What is this but, in Effect, to make God himself the Patron of a perpetual and unalterable Tyranny?

In opposition to such a pretended Right, which is equally without Foundation in Scripture and absurd in itself, the Cause we have to maintain is that of the natural Rights of Mankind, asserted by our glorious Revolution, which is now arraigned as Rebellion, and attempted to be overturned; The Right Mankind naturally have, to defend their Lives and Properties against Tyranny and Oppression, such as our Fathers had to struggle with in former Reigns; The natural Right of a Nation to shake off Tyranny, and to establish to themselves a free Government: It is the Cause of Liberty, secured by a *legal* Government; a Government of *settled* Laws, and not of *arbitrary* Will, where the Safety of the People is determined to be the supreme Law, and the End of the Government itself; *the Rights of Sovereignty*, and the Succession to the Crown, established in such a Way, as at the same Time equally establishes *the Right of the People* to be protected in all their valuable Interests, Civil and Religious. Such is the happy Government under which we have lived. It is further the Cause of *true Religion*, of pure and genuine Christianity, reformed from the Corruptions of Popish Superstition and Idolatry; our religious Liberties, in opposition to Popish Tyranny over the Faith and Consciences of Men; these inestimable Blessings secured by a Protestant Government, the only Way in which the Religion of Protestants can ever be secure.

Thus far I thought it of Importance to shew, that there is not the least Reason for any honest Mind to doubt, on which Side the Trial of Virtue lyes at this Time; that the Cause we have to maintain in opposition to a Popish Pretender and his Abettors, has every Thing which should justly recommend it, and engage our most firm Adherence to it; that it is a righteous Cause in the Foundation of it, as well as of the greatest Importance; the Cause of *Mankind, of National Justice and Right, of true Religion and Liberty*; justly to be reckoned, on all Accounts, *the Cause of God*.

Warmed with the *Glorious Cause*, let us stand our Ground against all the Arts and Violence of our Enemies. Their Violence, we in this City have been happily free of for some Time: God knows how long we may continue so, and whether we may not again suffer the like Disturbance. The Arts of some of them we are still exposed to. But let neither their Arts, nor their Violence, ever prevail with us to abandon the true Interests of our Country, and to favour the Cause of hereditary Tyranny and a Popish Government.

Let no specious Promises ever delude us into an Expectation of having our Liberties preserved, by one who claims us as his rightful Slaves, and declares it Rebellion in People, ever to have vindicated their Liberties against the most tyrannical Government. Let us never be amused with Promises of having our Religion secured, by one brought up in Enmity to it, obliged by his professed Principles to extirpate it on Pain of Damnation, and to keep no Faith to the contrary; his professed Devotion to the See of *Rome* obliging him to hold all Promises or Stipulations, “utterly null and void, of no Force or Obligation

“gation from the Beginning, when they are pre-
 “judicial in any Manner to (what is called)
 “the Catholick Faith, to the Salvation of Souls,”
 (which is maintained to be only in the Church of
 Rome) “to the Authority and Jurisdiction of the
 “Church, or to any of her Rights whatsoever; even
 “tho’ such Engagements have been often ratified and
 “confirm’d by Oath†.” This hath been expressly de-
 clared

† There are three remarkable Declarations of Pope *Cle-
 ment XI.* to this Purpose. One is in his *Epist. & Brev. Fol.
 Rom. 1724. Tom. 2. Pag. 179.* as quoted in the Bishop of Ox-
 ford’s excellent Sermon upon this Occasion: And the Affair
 to which it refers is this. The Protestants of *Silesia*, by the
 Treaty of *Westphalia*, had the free Exercise of their Religi-
 on, and their Churches, above 100 in Number, secured to
 them. After this, their Churches were taken from them.
Cha. XII. understanding that the Crown of *Sweden* had been
 made Guarentee of that Treaty for the Protestants of that
 Province, accordingly takes them under his Protection, and
 obliges the Emperor in the Year 1707, to enter into a new
 Treaty with them at *Alt-Ransbad* in their Favour, by which
 their Churches are restored to them, and the free Exercise of
 their Religion, according to the former Treaty. (See *Gor-
 thelfii Struv. Hist. Germ. Dissert. 38. p. 1885.* and *Voltaire’s*
History of Charles XII. pag. 117 and 118, Dubl. Edit. 12mo.)
 Concerning this Transaction the above Pope *Clement*, writ-
 ing to the Emperor *Charles VI.* hath these Words, which
 I shall set down as quoted in the *Acta Erudit. Lyppsi.* for
 1727, pag. 199. “*Majestati tuæ per præsentēs denuntiavimus,*
 “*ac insimul tradita nobis ab Omnipotente Deo auctoritate decla-*
 “*ramus, prænarratas dicti tractatus Altranstadenſis pactiones;*
 “*cæteraq; in eo contenta, quæ Catholicæ fidei, Divino cultui,*
 “*animorum salutē, Ecclesiæq; auctoritatē, jurisdictionē, libertatē*
 “*ac iuribus quibuscunq; quomodolibet officiunt, cum*
 “*omnibus & singulis inde secutis & quandocunq; secu-*
 “*turis, — ipso jure, nulla, irrita, invalida, injusta, reprobata,*
 “*inania, viribusq; & effectu penitus ac omnino vacua, ab*
 “*ipso initio fuisse, & esse, ac perpetuo fore, neminemq; ad*
 “*illorum seu cujuslibet illorum, etiamsi pluries ratificata,*
 “*ac juramento vallata sint, observantiam teneri.*”

In

clared of very late Years, in several Instances, by the pretended infallible Head of that Church, to whose Authority all her Members are bound to submit: And it is observable, these Declarations are made by one of the best and wisest of all their Popes, and the most remarkable for his Moderation. So little Place is there, for insinuating this to be a false Charge against the Church of *Rome*, as is done by some, who would have us *deal gently with her* at this Time *for their Sakes* (a). And, that we may not trust in the present Case, to some Men's being better than their Principles would lead them to be; the pernicious Principle hath *always* been reduced to Practice, whenever there was a fair Opportunity: It hath been felt by the *constant Experience* of Protestants, in this and other Nations, that the most express Laws, the most repeated Promises and Declarations, have proved no Security to the Protestant Religion under a Popish Prince: Never was there an Instance of Protestants enjoying their Religion securely in this Situation, for any Time, or without strong Attempts at least to destroy it, which

In like Manner, concerning certain Stipulations made by the Bishop of *Basil* with the Protestant Canton of *Bern*, in the Year 1711, the same Pope pronounces "Ea omnia nulla & invalida, nullius roboris aut momenti, neque Episcopum aut alium quempiam ad illorum seu cujuslibet illorum, etiamsi ratificata & juramento firmata sint, observantiam teneri." *Epist. & Brev. Tom. 2. p. 140. as quoted in the same Place of the Act. Lyss.*

Another Decree of his to the same Purpose in another Instance, together with other evident Proofs of its being an avowed Principle of the Church of *Rome*, not to keep Faith with Hereticks, the Reader may see in a fifth Letter taken from the *General Evening-Post*, now published.

(a) 2 Sam. xviii. 5.

which have been more or less executed, according as Circumstances favoured. Nor can it make us secure under the Government of one brought up in the Church of *Rome*, tho' we should suppose him indifferent as to Religion of any kind, on its own Account. One of this Character, having his Interests depending on the Power of *Rome*, will be not the less capable of employing a Pretence of Religion and of Zeal for the Catholick Faith, as an Engine of State, to promote his own ambitious and tyrannical Designs; and it is well known that mere political Bigots, who have had no Religion at Bottom, have very commonly been the most zealous, and disposed to stick at nothing, in carrying on the wicked Schemes of a worldly Policy under a religious Pretence, and have in this Way become the most cruel Persecutors.

What I have now said, gives me Occasion to advise you further, not to suffer your Zeal for the Protestant Religion, and for its Security under a Protestant Government,--to be cooled, by any little Attempts which now seem to be made, to reconcile Men's Minds to Popery, and to make the Absurdities of it appear less considerable than they have commonly been thought. Let not such Arts carry off your Attention from that Character of Popery, whereby it is distinguished from any thing which can be charged as absurd, on any Form of Religion professed among Protestants; that it authorizes Cruelty and Persecution for Conscience-sake; obliges to the Extirpation of Hereticks, *i. e.* Protestants, by Fire and Sword, and to break Faith with them whenever the Interests of the Church of *Rome* require it; Things which make Popery, in its own Nature, destructive to human Society, and the Profession of it--

an essential Incapacity in any Man to govern a Protestant Country.

Further, let not the Examples of others, whatever good Opinion you have had of them, whatever Connections you have with them, have Influence to draw you into this wicked Combination, or to make you think favourably of it. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil (a).* Let us not be moved by any Calumnies, or Revilings we may be assaulted with. In such Times as these, we may justly apply the Comfort of our Saviour's Words, *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely (b).* In short, let no Dangers we may at any time incur from the Malice and Rage of our Enemies, prevail with us to give up with the worthy Cause for which we appear. *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do (c):* Their Malice cannot reach to another World, nor affect our eternal Interests there. Even in a present View, let us not think Death the worst Thing that can befall us; Life, with the Curse of an ill Conscience, as Deserters of the Interest of our Country, is infinitely worse; in this, we would inflict greater Misery upon ourselves, than it is in the Power of Man to do without our Consent.

To establish and strengthen our Minds, amidst all our present Trials, and whatever others we may meet with, let us attend to the following Considerations.

(1.) Let us consider the Glory of a steadfast Integrity, and a brave publick Spirit; of adhering with Resolution to the Interests of true Religion and of

Man.

(a) Exod. xxiii. 2. (b) Matth. v. 11. (c) Luke xii. 4.

Mankind, despising all Dangers, all the Rage and Fury of violent Men; of being able to say with the Apostle, *None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might act my Part well, and finish my course with joy* (a). Let us consider the outward Glory which attends such a Character; the Glory of being beloved and esteemed by Mankind, of receiving their Trust and Confidence, of receiving from them the Praises of a steadfast Usefulness, of an unshaken Integrity and Faithfulness to their important Interests; the Glory of being useful Examples to animate others to the like worthy Behaviour. But there is a Glory independent of the World, and far preferable to all human Applause, which attends Constancy and Fortitude of Mind in overcoming Trials; the approving Testimony of Conscience within us. Let us think what Peace and Satisfaction, what Joy and Triumph of Soul this will yield us! A far more solid Satisfaction, than we can have in the greatest worldly Acquisitions: How vastly superior the Joy of this Self-applause, to the Acclamations of a whole World! To improve this to an higher Pitch, what unspeakable Satisfaction shall we have in the Sense of the Divine Approbation! In considering, and applying to ourselves, that Applause which our Lord bestows on a tried and steadfast Goodness; *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience; that thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith* (b).

(2.) Let us consider the glorious Reward with which a virtuous Constancy shall be crowned at last. *Be thou faithful unto death, saith our Saviour, and I will give thee a crown of Life* (c). Should we be called

(a) Acts xx. 24. (b) Rev. ii. 2, 13. (c) Rev. ii. 10.

called to sacrifice our Lives in the Cause of Religion, and of the Liberties of our Country, we die gloriously, and shall reap the Fruits of a stedfast Goodness in a better World. How delightful will it be beyond Conception, to receive that publick Sentence of Approbation from the Mouth of the great Judge, before Angels and all the World, *Well done thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord* (a). This shall introduce the faithful Servants of God into *fulness of joy in God's presence*, and at his *right-hand* (b). There they shall have Rest from all their Sufferings, and enjoy undisturbed Happiness. What an additional Pleasure will it then give them, to look back on all the Trials through which they have made their Way, and the Constancy and Strength of Mind which, by Divine Grace, they have shown! As Conquerors in a noble Warfare, with what Joy and Triumph shall they reflect on the Assaults they have sustained, and the Dangers they have overcome!

(3.) Let us attend to the Examples of those who have acted their Parts with Bravery and Constancy, in the like Times of Trial, or in greater than we have yet met with; who, in the Cause of God, have encountered the greatest worldly Terrors, Bonds, Imprisonments, Tortures, and Death, with an undaunted Mind. Let the Glory of such Examples animate our Ambition in pursuing the like worthy Course. Let us *be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises* (c). Let us particularly think of our brave Ancestors, who made a noble Stand for Religion and Liberty, against Popish Persecution, and the Violence of Arbitrary Power; and at the Expence of their Blood and
Treasure

(a) Matth. xxv. 21. (b) Psal. xvi. 11. (c) Heb. vi. 12.

Treasure procured, and have transmitted to us, the inestimable Blessings we have enjoyed. As we extol their Virtue, and acknowledge them as the glorious Instruments in the Hand of God, of conveying to us the civil and religious Advantages we have been blest with; let us not poorly forfeit our Share in the Glory, when we meet with any Measure of the like Trials. Let us entertain a noble Concern, to have *our* Names remembered with like Honour when we are gone, and to be remembered by *our* Posterity as the Instruments of their Happiness, the faithful Guardians of a publick Interest in Time of Danger. Together with a Sense of Glory, let us call up any thing of Humanity in us. Have we any Affection for our dear Children, our own Flesh and Blood; would we wish that *they* should be well and happy, when *we* have left the World? Or can we bear the Thought of *their* being in a State of Slavery and Misery, having the most bitter Remembrance of *us*, as the Betrayers of our Country? If these Things touch us, as they must do every human Heart; then let us be concerned, at all possible Hazards, to have the Blessings of a free and happy Government, and of religious Liberty handed down to *them*, to give them Occasion to remember with Pleasure, that the dear and invaluable Purchase, made by our Forefathers, hath been carefully preserved and maintained by *us*.

From the View of inferior Examples, let us rise in our Thoughts to *Jesus the author and finisher of our faith* (a); who animated with a most noble publick Spirit, an ardent Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Mankind, endured the cross, despising

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(a) Heb. xii. 2, 3.

spising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God; let us consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. How should it kindle in us a generous Ardour of Soul in encountering Trials and Difficulties, to think that they give us Opportunity of displaying the like Virtues of Patience, Fortitude, a superlative Love to God, an invincible Love to Mankind, and firm Adherence to their greatest Interests, for which our Blessed Redeemer was so illustrious! Let us be encouraged to *follow his steps* with unwearied Constancy, by the assured Hope of *living and reigning with him* at last. *To him that overcometh, says he, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne (a).*

By such Considerations as these, let us fortify our Minds, humbly depending on God for the necessary Aids of his Grace, which will not be wanting to our honest Endeavours. Let us beg of him, that he would *strengthen us with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness (b).*

Let us further contribute our mutual Endeavours, for animating and strengthening one another. Let it make us the more careful every one of his own Behaviour, and to act his own Part worthily,—that our Example may serve to animate others; that we may not by any Discovery of shameful Weakness or Discouragement, communicate the like Feebleness of Heart to *them*. Let us enliven and encourage one another, by our Conversation, our honest Expressions of Zeal, our mutual Exhortations, our Commendations

(a) Rev. iii. 21. (b) Col. i. 11.

ations of a laudable and brave Spirit wherever it appears, our friendly Admonitions for any Instances of Weakness.

Thus let us stir up ourselves and one another to act our Parts well, and to remain constant, in these Circumstances of Trial.

2. Let us now, in the *second* Place, reflect on such Times of Trial, as discovering in Men's Behaviour their *real* Tempers and Characters; and let us make a due Improvement of them in this View. They serve to discover Men to the World, and to themselves. With relation to this, I would offer you the following Instructions,

(1.) Let not the Discovery which these Times of Trial make of *other Men*, divert our Attention from *our own Hearts*. Let us be chiefly conversant with ourselves, attending to our own Temper and Behaviour: Let it be our principal Concern, to improve in an Acquaintance with our own Character as discovered by such Trials, and to act our own Parts well in these trying Circumstances.

(2.) Let not the Discovery which possibly may be made of Falseness of Heart, or of Fickleness and Inconstancy in some, dispose us to a general Suspicion; like the Psalmist, who meeting with Disappointments, was ready to say in his haste that *all men were liars*. Let us always be willing to think the best we reasonably can of Mankind, and be ready to do all Justice to every Man's Character. Let us never entertain with Pleasure the Discovery of any Thing bad; let it be our greatest Satisfaction, to discover and acknowledge any Instances of real Goodness and Honesty.

(3.) While these Times of Trial make Discoveries to the Disadvantage of some, let us be disposed

so much the more, to take Notice of those who show a stedfast Goodness and Integrity; who distinguish themselves by their Constancy and Fortitude of Mind, their Courage and Zeal, in a good and worthy Cause. Let us be ready to show a just Esteem of them, and to reward them with that Praise and Honour, that Trust and Confidence which is due to them.

(4.) Let us always make a Difference between evident Discoveries of a bad Heart, and Instances of Weakness and Frailty: These, where there appears Honesty of Heart in the main, let us learn to touch with a friendly and gentle Hand, so as not to discourage those in whom we take Notice of them: Let us be much more inclin'd to discover and commend what is truly Praise-worthy, than narrowly to mark Imperfections. Thus let us *lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees* (a); and contribute to the *healing of that which is lame; say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not* (b).

(5.) In the last Place, let us with all Care set about what mainly concerns us, the Improvement of these Trials as Means of discovering us to ourselves. We ought frequently to recollect ourselves in these Circumstances, and carefully examine the Particulars of our Temper and Conduct. If our own Minds approve of us upon serious Reflection, let our Experience of the inward Pleasures of this Self-approbation confirm us the more in the Paths of Goodness, and excite us to go on in them, and inspire us with further Resolution for encountering what greater Trials may yet cast up to us. At the same

(a) Heb. xii. 12, 13. (b) Isa. xxxv. 3, 4.

same Time, let us be ready to acknowledge any Instances of Weakness or Inconstancy of Mind which may appear in us; let us be willing to suffer the Uneasiness of discovering the worst and most foolish Things about us, that we may be excited to correct them, and may be still rising to further Degrees of Improvement in Wisdom and Virtue.

Thus shall we come forth out of all our Trials more glorious in *the beauties of holiness*, of a steadfast and more refined Virtue. Amidst all the Darkness and Gloom surrounding us in our present State, our path shall be as *the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day* (a). In this Way, our *light afflictions which are but for a moment*, shall work for us *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory* (b); they shall serve to train us up for that Happiness, to prepare us by the Growth of all good Dispositions for the sublime Exercises and Enjoyments of that blessed State, and to improve our Relish for the pure and undisturbed Joys we shall then be possessed of. To which may God of his infinite Mercy bring us, through Jesus Christ.

A M E N.

(a) Prov. iv. 18. (b) 1 Cor. iv. 17,

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